The Moscow Times
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Economic Crisis Increases Return of Adopted Children in Russia

February 17, 2017



Igor Tabakov / MT

The number of adoptive families in Russia's northern Komi Republic dropped by nearly one hundred in 2016, the region's Deputy Labor Minister Alexei Zezegov said at a local government meeting on Wednesday.

Families are returning adopted children to the region's orphanages, Zezegov explained, because they don't have enough money to raise them.

On average, the children being returned are 12-years-old, the official said. In 2015, 1930 families housed adopted children in Komi. By 2016, that figure had fallen to1843, local media reported.

Tatyana Saladina, a local lawmaker, has urged the Labor Ministry to increase benefits for parents adopting children. Currently, parents get 8,000 rubles ($137) a month for each child they adopt, whereas raising a child in an orphanage costs the budget 78,000 rubles ($1,342) a

month, she said. Increasing payouts to parents to 15,000 rubles ($258) would save the budget and increase adoption rates, she said.

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Zezegov said the Ministry is now considering introducing an additional one-time payout to adoptive families who care for children until they turn 18. Currently, every adoptive family gets 200,000 rubles ($3,440) as start-up money. Every family that adopts children with disabilities gets 250,000 rubles ($4,300), the official said.

In recent years, the number of adoptions in Russia has decreased. In 2012, Russian families adopted 6,500 children, whereas in 2015 that number was only 5,900. International adoption reached its lowest point last year, plummeting from 2,400 children in 2012 to 746 in 2015.

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